



A PARADE IN THE BARRACK YARD, DUBLIN.  
THE ROYAL IRISH CONSTABULARY.

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the divided responsibility militated heavily against the efficiency of the force, and the concentration of command became necessary; hence the union in 1836. The title then officially given to them was "The Constabulary of Ireland." The commanding officer was called the inspector-general, and the cost was defrayed from the Consolidated Fund. While titles thus remained purely civil, the drill and equipment of the force was entirely of a military nature—a pleasing little fiction not unlike that acted to-day in our own North-West, where a splendid body of dragoons are misnamed "Mounted Police." After the success and efficiency of the constabulary became assured, the Government decided to absorb into their ranks the various bodies



UNIFORM OF FIFTY YEARS AGO.

derry Police in 1870, becoming successively merged into the national force; one body alone—the Dublin Metropolitan Police—still remains separate.

The Constabulary have had need of the strictest discipline and most severe training, as their duties have often been of a nature far more trying and unpleasant than those usually performed by the military, even when on arduous foreign service; and they have had repeatedly to incur hatred and active hostility from their fellow-countrymen, instead of the plaudits and good feeling which soldiers almost always experience when in their own land. The most noteworthy events in the history of the force have been their quelling of Smith O'Brien's insurrection in 1848, and of the Fenian rising in 1865. In the former case less than ninety policemen defeated the motley "army" of over two thousand who had followed the young agitator; but it must be noted that the rebels were underfed, armed in the rudest way, and composed largely of lads. In 1865 a general attack took place on all the police barracks in the country, but, with one or two exceptions, was unsuccessful; the loss of life altogether was very small, not exceeding half a dozen insurgents and one or two policemen, although the latter were in most instances suddenly fired on through the barracks windows. As a recompense for the excellent behaviour of the force at this time Parliament voted them a gratuity of £2,000, and by special command of Her Majesty the title of the force was changed to "The Royal Irish Constabulary." This was officially promulgated at a state review in Phoenix Park, Dublin, in 1867, by the Lord Lieutenant. The gratuity was a mere bagatelle—not one tenth of what was deserved; this was felt on all sides, but for 15 years more no additional pay was granted. Then came a truly magnificent bonus, the sum of £180,000 was divided through the force, followed in 1883 by the removal of some old grievances and an increase in the pay of the N. C. officers and men.

The last serious and prolonged riot in which the Constabulary took a prominent part was that in Belfast five years ago. Many will remember the details of the struggle; originating in a petty faction fight, it spread over a great



IN its system of police protection Ireland occupies a unique position. Instead of a number of organizations in each city or district under local authority, the force which does duty throughout the whole island is under one management, and amenable to only one set of regulations, and this police body has also the unquestioned distinction of being the finest corps of military-police in the world. This force is the Royal Irish Constabulary, possessing a world-wide reputation for strict discipline and steadiness in the performance of the most trying and unpleasant duties.

The history of the force, as at present constituted, dates back to 1836, when it was organized by Sir Robert Peel, then Chief Secretary for Ireland. For fourteen years previous to that date there had existed several provincial police forces, under different chiefs, who fought the battle of order throughout the island with a fair measure of success; but

of local police that existed in various parts of the island, and in course of time this was effected; the Revenue Police in 1857, the Belfast Police in 1865, and the London-